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MATTERS RELATING TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FINANCIAL MECHANISM AND FOR TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES

PROVISION TO DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Progress report on the project for an information exchange system for country activities on climate change

Note by the interim secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Scope of the note

1. At its eighth session, the Committee invited the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Executive Secretary of the interim secretariat to continue work on the project for an information exchange system for country activities on climate change, otherwise known as "Climex", taking full account of the comments and concerns expressed by delegations during the discussion of this item, and to report on progress to the ninth session of the Committee for its further consideration (A/AC.237/41, para. 100).

2. This note provides the Committee with a brief progress report on the activities undertaken so far by this project.

B. Possible action by the Committee

3. The Committee is invited to take note of progress achieved, and to provide inputs to the further development and implementation of the project.

4. Delegations may wish to begin making use of this facility by providing information on and transmitting requests to the project in support of relevant climate change related national activities.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL STATUS

5. The joint project formally started on 1 October 1993 with the hiring of the project manager, on a short-term contract, pending confirmation of financial arrangements for the full 12-month period of the pilot phase. In addition, one general service staff works for the project on a full-time basis. UNEP is providing six months of professional staff time over the 12-month period for activities related to this project, of which half will be provided by the UNEP Climate Unit and half from the UNEP/WMO Information Unit on Climate Change (IUCC). In addition to the cost of the UNEP staff working part-time on this project, the expected cost of the activities related to the project during the first 12 months of the pilot phase is estimated to be approximately US$750,000.

6. After further discussions with UNEP, a joint work plan was developed and a proposal was drawn up for funding the project. The draft proposal has passed the initial stages of approval in UNEP and it is expected that it will be finalized in the first quarter of 1994.

7. Since funds from UNEP are expected to cover only a part of the overall funding requirements, several countries have also been approached to provide extrabudgetary financial resources for the project. Requests relate to contributions to the trust fund for secretariat expenses and bilateral staff support arrangements. So far, the financial resources required for the pilot phase of the project have not yet been fully assured.

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO DATE

8. The draft work plan has been developed and includes indications for specific tasks to be undertaken by full-time project staff (based at the interim secretariat), as well as by existing staff in the UNEP Climate Unit, and the IUCC. While the full details of this work plan are still being discussed, some elements have already been started.

9. In particular, work has begun on the development of a database for information collected in the context of the project, in cooperation with the IUCC. Data entry has started, and project staff are beginning to make use of the information contained in the database. This information will be available on request. Reports, both in printed format, and on computer diskettes, will also be prepared for the tenth session of the Committee. Some information will also be available at that time on electronic networks.

10. Collection of data has centred around two elements. On the one hand, the UNEP Climate Unit has continued to collect and update information needed for its report to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on country studies. It has also embarked on broadening the collection of information to cover activities on impacts and response strategies, which will also provide useful information for the project.

11. On the other hand, efforts have been made to intensify the collection of information from countries and organizations that are supporting climate change related activities, financially or otherwise. An initial meeting of organizations supporting climate change related country studies was held in Geneva, on 18 January 1994, under the auspices of the Climex project. The meeting was well attended and participants welcomed the project and committed themselves to support it and make use of its services.

12. The above-mentioned meeting provided the project with a considerable amount of new information concerning:

(a) Countries and organizations involved in supporting climate change related country activities;

(b) Financial, human, technical and other resources available from these countries and organizations;

(c) Criteria and procedures for receiving such resources;

(d) Current country activities on climate change that are supported by these countries and organizations.

13. Project staff are now processing the information from this meeting and will later disseminate it on request.

14. In order to provide up-to-date information on the Climex project, including on the outcome of the above meeting, a seminar is being organized for interested delegations during the ninth session of the Committee. Details concerning the time and place of the seminar will be announced at the start of the session.

IV. FURTHER STEPS

15. Efforts to raise sufficient funding for the project from UNEP and from countries will continue, in order to ensure the operation of the project, at least during the pilot phase.

16. The Climex project will intensify information collection, processing and dissemination during the period between the ninth and the tenth sessions of the Commitee. It is expected that by the tenth session a sufficient information base will have been collected and processed, thus enabling the project to promote an effective exchange of this information between countries and organizations.

17. The interim secretariat and UNEP will prepare an internal evaluation of the pilot phase of this project by July 1994. Based on this evaluation, a proposal on how the Climex project could be pursued after the pilot phase will be prepared for the consideration of the Committee at its tenth session.

18. The success of the project will depend to a great extent on the use countries make of it. The more that countries request information from the Climex project and inform the project staff of their need to undertake activities for which they need assistance, the more effective the role that the project can play.

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